



Childhood Connections

September 6, 2023

## Spotlight on Professionals

Spotlight on Professionals aims to share stories from those working in childhood programs. This includes all professionals such as home visiting, early intervention, child care, Head Start, preschool, and afterschool. These stories are also available on the [Early Connections website](#).



Photo Credit: Brianna Lincoln

This month's "Spotlight on Professionals" focuses on Brianna Lincoln.

Brianna currently works as a paraprofessional and long-term substitute with the Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) program within Kansas City Public Schools (KCPS). After high school, Brianna enrolled at University of Central Missouri (UCM) in 2012.

Brianna says, "I knew I wanted to teach little children because that's where it all begins, the early intervention stages."

After completing 60 credit hours at UCM, Brianna accepted a part-time position with KCPS working in the pre-kindergarten Head Start. She shifted into ECSE in 2017 and graduated from UCM with her bachelor's degree in Child and Family Development in 2018.

Shortly after graduating, Brianna discovered a cohort program offered through UCM that would allow her to obtain her early childhood teaching certification. She joined the program without hesitation.

As she continues in her role with KCPS, Brianna knows that she made the right career choice. Her advice to those considering the profession is, "If you are dedicated and truly passionate about teaching, this is what you should do."

When she reflects how children grow over the course of a year and the families she has helped in her role, Brianna feels joy and pride. She hopes that others will see the benefits of choosing early childhood education saying "We're always in need of loving and caring educators to make a difference in the lives of children."

## UPDATED! Contact Us Document

The OOC [Contact Us Document](#) has been updated to include the addition of the statewide phone number for families and parents to find child care, resources and access first steps. Contacts for MOQPK grants, the child care collaborative networks, and child care subsidy contract compliance have also been updated.

## NEW! Training Opportunity

Training for administrators.

Missouri Supporting Early Childhood Administrators (MO-SECA) is dedicated to supporting leadership and business excellence in early childhood programs. Through a team of early childhood quality specialists and statewide partners, MO-SECA provides individualized professional development coaching and in-person business and leadership training tailored to early childhood administrators.

MO-SECA serves early childhood programs for family providers, small centers, and multi-site programs. Join a growing network of 800+ administrators across the state, by enrolling on the MO-SECA [webpage](#). If you have questions about next steps, call 816-235-166.

## COMING SOON! Process Change for Background Checks for Child Care Staff Members

We want to alert you to important changes that are coming soon to the background screening process for child care staff members.

Effective October 1, 2023, the order of the steps in the background screening process are changing.

- **New process:** Before a current or prospective child care staff member can be fingerprinted, you must first send a completed Comprehensive Background Check Notification form to the background screening unit within the Office of Childhood (OOC). You will no longer be able to access the fingerprint code or instructions online.
  - This change in process is necessary for Missouri to be in compliance with the Federal Bureau of Investigation and Missouri State Highway Patrol requirements.



## REMINDER! Early Childhood State Advisory Council (ECSAC) Meeting

The next meeting of the ECSAC will be on Tuesday, October 10, 2023, at 12:30 p.m.

Read more about the council responsibilities on the [ECSAC webpage](#).

## REMINDER! Comprehensive Background Screening

We are fast approaching the 5-year anniversary of implementing the comprehensive background screening process.

The approaching anniversary will affect many providers, including Licensed Family Homes, Group Homes, Centers, and School-Age programs, and License-Exempt Nursery Schools, as well as Subsidy providers.

Don't wait until the last minute. Make sure to do your own self-assessments and file reviews to ensure your staff records are up-to-date.

## UPDATE! Child Care Relief Funds

The Child Care Relief Funds team and its vendors are working

- Once OOC reviews the information, the background screening unit will inform you by email of the fingerprint instructions for the individual(s) that do not have a comprehensive background screening within the last 5 years and need to complete the fingerprint process.
- When the results of both the fingerprints and Family Care Safety Registry screening are available for review by the background screening unit, they will notify the provider and the child care staff member of the results determining if the individual is eligible or ineligible to work or be present in a child care setting.

### Coming Soon! Fingerprint Payment

October 1, 2023, the OOC will begin paying for the cost of fingerprinting for the purpose of the required criminal background check for child care staff members. The OOC will pay for fingerprinting until further notice.

- OOC will *not* issue reimbursement when:
  - There is any issue with the DESE automatic billing account and the individual chooses to pay for the cost of fingerprinting; or
  - Those who registered to be fingerprinted, or completed their fingerprinting, prior to October 1, 2023.

Look for more information and reminders ahead of the October 1 effective date. We appreciate your patience as we implement these changes. Please contact the Background Screening Unit at [OCBackgroundChecks@dese.mo.gov](mailto:OCBackgroundChecks@dese.mo.gov) or call 573-751-2450, option 2 if you have questions.

### NEW! Child Care Inclusion Services

Child Care Inclusion Services help families locate care for children with special needs and support child care providers. Inclusion specialists offer training and technical assistance to help caregivers meet the needs of and provide the best care to all children, including those with special needs.

For more information, [visit the United 4 Children webpage](#).

### New! Missouri Child Care Subsidy Rate Study

hard to close out two federal grants by September 30, 2023.

Please watch your email for notifications from our DESE Child Care Relief team if your program participated in the CRRSA and/or ARPA-S funding opportunities, and respond quickly to requests for information, as needed.

### UPDATE! Head Start

The OOC recently awarded six Early Head Start state funded contracts. To learn more about Early Head Start or for help locating a Head Start Program, visit the [Early Head Start](#) page on our website.

### SAVE THE DATE! Conference on the Young Years

The 51st Conference on the Young Years will be March 7-9, 2024, at Tan-Tar-A Conference Center in Osage Beach, Missouri.

We have a great lineup of keynote and featured speakers along with many breakout session presenters.

Vendors & exhibitors may now [reserve their booth space for CYY 2024](#). Sponsorships are also available.

Make plans to join us for the 2024 conference and

The OOC contracted with the University of Missouri-Columbia to examine national trends in child care subsidy rates, as well as facilitate a series of focus groups and surveys with child care providers in Missouri. The primary goal of the rate study was to evaluate perspectives of the current rate structure and opinions about a simplified rate structure. Additionally, the researchers collected perspectives on the current payment delivery approach and opinions about other payment delivery options.

Overall, providers requested a “simplification” of the subsidy program to the extent possible, from the application process to the rate structure. The OOC will use the information from this study, along with additional input from stakeholders, for the 2024 Market Rate Survey. You can read the full [Rate Study](#) on our website.

### **ANNOUNCEMENT! The First Steps Program Continues to Grow**

The University of Central Missouri and the Mid-America Regional Council - Kansas City recently conducted an updated eligibility forecasting study for the First Steps program. The study looked at census numbers and historical program data to project the number of children who may be eligible for First Steps through the year 2028.

To review the updated study, along with historical eligibility forecasting studies, visit [DESE's additional resources webpage](#).

### **NEW! CDC Recommends RSV Shots For Infants**

Infants under 8 months of age are now recommended to receive an RSV antibody shot ahead of their first RSV season, according to [new guidance from the CDC](#) released August 3, 2023.

This follows a meeting of agency advisers, who unanimously approved this, and marks the first time such recommendations have been made. The antibody, beximovir, was approved by the FDA in late July 2023.

### **NEW! FDA Approves First Oral Drug for Postpartum Depression**

The FDA recently approved the first and only oral treatment for postpartum depression in adults. The prescription drug zuranolone is a once daily

“Explore the Possibilities” with us.

### **NEW! Preschool Curriculum**

Two additional comprehensive preschool curriculums were approved and added to the list of approved curriculums.

Comprehensive curriculums include all areas of the Missouri Learning Standards and can be found under [Approved Preschool Curriculums](#) on our website.

### **Update! Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS)**

ECIDS is the state’s early childhood integrated data system that securely collects, store, and maintains early childhood information from different sources.

Missouri created ECIDS to improve decisions about early childhood policies and services.

[Review this document](#) to learn more about ECIDS and the project timeline.

### **NEW! Best Practices Documents**

The OOC worked with the University of Missouri - Kansas City and multiple stakeholders to develop two sets of best practices, one for family

treatment that in clinical trials saw onset of action at day three of a fourteen day trial, that persisted throughout the study period and after the last dose of zuranolone.

Read more at the [FDA press release](#).

### UPDATE! Mandated Reporter Training

Missouri KidsFirst manages Missouri's Online Mandated Reporter training and has recently updated the training with content on:

- the scope of child abuse/neglect in Missouri.
- reporting bias and cultural responsiveness when reporting;
- interactive learning scenario on the difference between poverty vs. neglect; and
- frequently asked questions video about the hotline unit.

The online training is free, online/mobile friendly, and approved for continuing education credits. Visit the [website](#) for additional information.

### REMINDER! Child Care Provider Survey

Are you a licensed or unlicensed child care provider who had a recent inspection or investigation within the last 30 days? If you haven't already, please complete a [brief survey](#) to tell us how we're doing. Your feedback helps OOC child care compliance staff continue to improve the inspection and investigation process.

Child care providers can use the link above or scan the QR code to take the survey.



engagement and one for programs and professionals.

When implemented in your program, these practices have the biggest impact on positive outcomes for children and families. The documents are available on the [Early Connections Tips for Professionals](#) webpage.

### Spotlight on Success

Spotlight on Success aims to share stories from local programs that are building community partnerships in order to strengthen and coordinate childhood programs.





Region 14 Community Leaders and their consultant had the opportunity to participate in the first Project Connect Community Outreach event held in Cass County on June 23, 2023. Compass health hosted the event with 57 vendors participating. The event, held at the Belton high school, was open to all community members. Transportation was free and stationed nearby at a pantry, which is highly accessible to the local homeless community. During the event, the Community Leaders connected and created partnerships with 15 additional community agencies that offer services to families in Cass county as well as neighboring communities. Each new agency has been added to Region 14's resource map for Bates, Cass, Henry, and Johnson counties.

"The Project Connect Community Outreach event provided such a unique experience... As Community leaders, we were prepared to help families and share our information, but didn't realize we were going to learn so much about other community resources. We were able to make many connections among organizations, put names with faces, and add several new resources to our Region 14 Resource Guide by being able to network with all other vendors in attendance. This felt like a family event when in reality most of didn't even know each other before we arrived," said Kristi Reynolds and Stacey Sartin of Region 14.

Community members that attended this event were encouraged to take advantage of many free services. These included tooth extraction, haircuts, hearing screenings, health assessments, employment assistance, and help applying for SNAP, Medicaid, and WIC.

Region 14 provided a sunscreen bottle with QR code leading families to their resource map. In addition, postcards and magnets, with the QR code, were given out to 135 people.

Region 14 is looking forward to joining future community events to continue building partnerships and assisting families in accessing these needed services.

## UPDATE! Preschool Development Grant



The Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five (PDG B-5) provides funding over three years to coordinate a more effective, high-quality early childhood system that better prepares Missouri children for success.

Each month the Office of Childhood hosts a live webinar to provide updates and information about the PDG B-5 to stakeholders. A [recording](#) and the [PowerPoint slides](#) from the August webinar is available in case you were unable to attend and wish to hear the information. You can view archived webinars here:

- [July 2023](#)
- [June 2023](#)
- [May 2023](#)
- [April 2023](#)
- [March 2023](#)
- [February 2023](#)

A [PDG B-5 dashboard](#) is also updated monthly. This dashboard provides an at-a-glance look at priority areas, budget status, and key accomplishments.

### PDG B-5 Monthly Webinar

Join us for the next PDG B-5 Stakeholder webinar on Tuesday, September 26, 2023, from noon to 12:45 p.m. to learn more and ask questions. You can [access the webinar](#) in a Google Chrome or Safari web browser. Do not view in Internet Explorer. We hope you can participate!

For questions about the stakeholder webinar series, or suggestions for topics in future webinars, email us at [Childhood@dese.mo.gov](mailto:Childhood@dese.mo.gov).

### Archived Editions of Childhood Connections

Visit the Office of Childhood website to find [previous editions](#) of the Childhood Connections.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, age, veteran status, mental or physical disability, or any other basis prohibited by statute in its programs and activities. Inquiries related to department programs and to the location of services, activities, and facilities that are accessible by persons with disabilities may be directed to the Jefferson State Office Building, Director of Civil Rights Compliance and MOA Coordinator (Title VI/Title VII/Title IX/504/ADA/ADAAA/Age Act/GINA/USDA Title VI), 5th Floor, 205 Jefferson Street, P.O. Box 480, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0480; telephone number 573-526-4757 or TTY 800-735-2966; email [civilrights@dese.mo.gov](mailto:civilrights@dese.mo.gov).



[Unsubscribe](#) | [Report Spam](#)